

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 EB-07
COME-00 AID-05 IGA-02 IO-13 /089 W
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FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5832

INFO AMCONSUL CAPETOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LUSAKA 1603

CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, ENRG, EMIN, ZA, RH

SUBJ: RHODESIAN THREATS TO CUT-OFF ZAMBIA'S ELECTRICITY

REF: LUSAKA 1599

SUMMARY: RHODESIA HAS THREATENED TO CUT OFF ZAMBIA'S ELECTRICITY
SUPPLY FROM THE KARIBA SOUTH HYDRO-ELECTRIC SCHEME AND
CLAIMS THIS WOULD STOP THE PUMPS AND CAUSE FLOODING IN ZAMBIA'S
COPPER MINES. ZAMBIAN OFFICIALS DISCOUNT THE THREAT SAYING
THAT ZAMBIA NOW PRODUCES MORE THAN ENOUGH ELECTRIC POWER TO
MEET DOMESTIC DEMAND. MINE OFFICIALS REPORT THAT STAND-BY
GENERATING CAPACITY IS AVAILABLE TO MEET ANY SHORT TERM POWER
DISRUPTION. END SUMMARY

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1. ACCORDING TO ZAMBIAN PRESS REPORTS, THE RHODESIAN MINISTER
FOR COMBINED OPERATIONS, MR. ROGER HAWKINS, HAS THREATENED
TO SHUT OFF ZAMBIA'S ELECTRIC SUPPLY FROM THE HYDRO-ELECTRIC
SCHEME ON THE RHODESIAN SIDE OF THE KARIBA DAM (KARIBA
SOUTH). THIS, HE CLAIMED, WOULD RESULT IN THE FLOODING OF
ALL OF ZAMBIA'S COPPER MINES WITHIN THREE DAYS WITH A
"DEVASTATING" EFFECT ON ZAMBIA'S ECONOMY.

2. ZAMBIAN OFFICIALS IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER, TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ZAMBIA ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY, HOWEVER, DISCOUNT THE CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH A MOVE BY RHODESIA. THEY POINTED OUT THAT THE ADDITIONAL 660 MVA GENERATING CAPACITY OF THE NEWLY COMMISSIONED KARIBA NORTH POWER PROJECT MAKES ZAMBIA SELF-SUFFICIENT IN ELECTRIC POWER AND THAT ELECTRICITY FROM THE NEW FACILITY IS ALREADY TIED INTO THE COPPERBELT DISTRIBUTION GRID. ZAMBIA, THEY CLAIM, CAN SUPPLY ENOUGH POWER ON ITS OWN TO RUN THE PUMPS TO KEEP THE MINES DRY. IN ADDITION, MINING OFFICIALS FROM BOTH ROAN CONSOLIDATED MINES AND NCCM INFORMED EMBASSY OFFICERS ON ANOTHER OCCASION THAT THERE IS SUFFICIENT LOCAL STAND-BY GENERATING CAPACITY TO RUN THE PUMPS IN THE EVENT OF A DISRUPTION IN THE NORMAL SOURCE OF POWER SUPPLY. THE STAND-BY CAPACITY IS NOT DESIGNED FOR LONG TERM USE BUT ONLY FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS. THUS, EVEN IF RHODESIA DID CUT OFF THE SUPPLY, STAND-BY EQUIPMENT COULD BE BROUGHT INTO PLAY IMMEDIATELY AND ZAMBIA'S OWN PRODUCTION CAPACITY COULD BE UTILIZED FOR THE LONG TERM.

3. ZAMBIA'S POWER PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION FIGURES BACK UP THE STATEMENTS BY POWER OFFICIALS. ZAMBIAN PRODUCTION FROM INSTALLATIONS AT KAFUE, LIVINGSTONE, KARIBA NORTH AND SOME SMALLER OPERATIONS WAS 3,792 MILLION KW FOR THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF 1976 (BEFORE COMPLETION OF KARIBA NORTH). ELECTRIC POWER SOLD TO ZAMBIAN CONSUMERS FOR THE SAME PERIOD WAS 3,751 MILLION KW. AN ADDITIONAL 3,344 MILLION KW WAS SUPPLIED TO ZAMBIA BY THE JOINTLY OWNED (RHODESIA AND ZAMBIA) CENTRAL AFRICAN POWER CORPORATION FROM THE KARIBA SOUTH FACILITY. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EVEN WHEN OFFICIAL EXPORT STATISTICS ARE ADDED IN, ZAMBIA APPEARS TO BE UTILIZING CONSIDERABLY LESS ELECTRICITY THAN SHE IS PRODUCING ON HER OWN AND GETTING FROM CENTRAL AFRICAN POWER. CERTAINLY, WITH THE PROPER DISTRIBUTION ARRANGEMENT, ZAMBIA CAN PRODUCE ENOUGH POWER TO MEET ALL DOMESTIC DEMAND, INCLUDING THE MINES.

COMMENT: WHILE IT APPEARS THAT ZAMBIA HAS SUFFICIENT GENERATING CAPACITY TO SUPPLY HER ELECTRICAL NEEDS, ITS ALSO QUITE LIKELY THAT SOME OF THIS POWER IS ROUTED THROUGH SWITCH-GEAR ON THE RHODESIAN SIDE OF THE BORDER. ZAMBIA WOULD PROBABLY BE FACED WITH SOME POWER DISTRIBUTION DISLOCATIONS IF RHODESIA PULLED THE SWITCH, BUT THE CONSEQUENCES WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE AS SERIOUS AS PREDICTED BY RHODESIA. END COMMENT. CLINGERMAN

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Sent Date: 08-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Disposition History: n/a
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